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ABSTRACT

Afro-American relations with Africa have had significant effects on the identity of Black people in the United States since the Revolutionary period. This paper presents an historical analysis of the linkages between Africa and Afro-Americans in an attempt to clarify the changing self-image of Blacks in the United States. When Africa was partitioned in 1885 and colonized by European powers, numerous missionary endeavors were made by Afro-Americans to redeem and civilize their African brethren through the American culture. Soon afterwards Afro-Americans began to articulate African political grievances in an attempt to deliver Africa from the abuses of European colonialism. Effects of cultural linkages were visible in the 1950s and 1960s as African religious and arts groups were established in some areas of the United States. The idea of establishing a dual American/African citizenship for Afro-Americans living in the United States was considered during the 1960s. In recent years, the African struggle for decolonization has prompted a sense of increased political empathy and feelings of pride in African heritage on the part of Afro-Americans. On ideological, political, and organizational levels, Afro-Americans are becoming more aware of their own identity within American society partly as a result of developments on the African continent. (AV)

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AFRO-AMERICAN LINKAGES WITH AFRICA

IN TRANSNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

Ethnic Heritage Studies Project

1976

A Monograph

prepared by

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Afro-American relations with Africa have historically been the subject of a rich and varied body of scholarship whose object has been to comprehend the undeniably complex meaning of Africa as a source of profound influence in the lives of people of African descent in America. The relations which have emerged between Afro-Americans and Africans extend as far back as the Revolutionary period in American history and have coursed with them throughout their journey on the long and tortuous road that they have been forced to walk in pursuit of freedom and dignity in this country. Indeed, the force of the Africa tie has exerted in recent times what can only be described as a revolutionizing influence on the way in which Afro-Americans have come to see themselves as a people with a distinct identity and, in consequence, the way in which they view their relation to America and the rest of the world. It would not be an exaggeration to say that no serious student of race relations in America, past and present, can afford to overlook the Afro-American linkage with Africa in examining either the position that Afro-Americans have been historically relegated to in this society or the means whereby Afro-Americans have tried to advance their lot.

The scholarship that has grown out of this unique intellectual confrontation with the place of Afro-Americans in American history and society includes a variety of approaches. Depending on the particular subject area of the Afro-American experience that is being studied, scholars have looked at the phenomenon as forming part of what has been described as the "African Diaspora" or "African

Heritage" which finds expression through the ideology of Black Nationalism or Pan-Africanism. Each of these approaches have established and well-articulated justifications for one or other of the perspectives, and sometimes there is considerable overlapping between them. Basic to these approaches, however, is the conviction that the Afro-American experience only makes sense when looked at as part of a broader movement and adaptation of African culture to the conditions of New World enslavement that Africans underwent, and that given the nature of this European-imposed slavery, people of African descent have been forced into a struggle to reclaim their African identity as part of the wider need to be culturally emancipated from the debased status to which they had been culturally relegated. While the subject of this struggle for freedom and dignity within the context of Euro-American domination has been the restoration of Africa to a place of pride and a powerful source of self-legitimation, the mechanisms through which Afro-Americans have sought to achieve this identification with Africa have been historically varied. Perhaps the two most potent linkages have come through the recurring phenomenon of 'back-to-Africa' aspirations or movements and the assertion of missionary or evangelizing duties that have taken large numbers of Afro-American clergy to Africa. Indeed, at certain critical points these two approaches have constituted a single approach, though at other times they have been developed independently of each other. Beyond the repatriation and missionary impulses there have also developed educational, diplomatic, political, and mercantile ties that have emerged to support a wide variety of undertakings linking Afro-Americans with African interests. It

should be emphasized, however, that these relationships have never run in a single direction from America to Africa but have been the result of reciprocal and reinforcing expressions on the part of Africans, the result of which have made the web of Afro-American connections with Africa a complex and fascinating example of trans-national linkages across polities and societies widely separated in terms of technological and material conditions. These linkages have been developed and articulated, one might conclude, in spite of the contradiction between their relative social and historical capabilities. This certainly attests to the strength and resilience of the African nexus by which Afro-Americans have sought the means to achieve cultural and political self-expression in this society.

If scholars have been able, however, to address the question of the Afro-American connection by means of typologies such as "African Diaspora" and "African Heritage", which has distinct advantages when discussing the diversity of the Afro-American experience, the truth is that scholars have thus far failed to agree upon the meaning which should be assigned to the status the Afro-American group occupies in American society. Great controversies have been waged between contending viewpoints as to whether Afro-Americans represent an ethnic group, a social caste or segment, an internal colony, or a class. No agreement on the issue of the social definition to be accorded Afro-Americans has thus far emerged, and none appears in sight at this stage of development in scholarly inquiry. But while there is something to be said for each of these several approaches, it is this author's view that the status which Afro-Americans occupy within American society can best be understood as that of a national

minority. When looked at within this frame of reference, it can be seen that the national character of the Afro-American status arises not from any past or present connection with Africa, though Africa validates it, but from the fact that as a group Afro-Americans are made to suffer the effects of prejudice and differential access to the sources of power in America. This fact cuts across class or stratification lines in spite of the fact that individual black Americans have attained clear positions of wealth and influence, something that has not basically altered the fundamental second-class status of the group. Moreover, this status is nationally defined, i.e., it is not limited or linked by relations with any one specific ethnic group of Americans but is the common or national condition of its relations with Americans as a whole. Indeed, to state the matter bluntly, with the exception of Native-Americans and Mexican-Americans, all other groups that make up the population of America consider themselves white in relation to Afro-Americans, regardless of whether the group might be Irish, Russian, Slavene, Italian, Polish, Armenian, Spanish, Anglo-Saxon, Portuguese, etc. Hence, white is not a strictly racial category in America so much as it is a social definition that negatively describes and determines the national condition of Afro-Americans. By this same measure, we would not consider Native-Americans as an ethnic group, nor Mexican-Americans an ethnic group, though in the latter case it has to do more with the fact that Mexican-Americans are still largely bound to their Mexican nationality, and where they are no longer thus bound, they have been absorbed as a transferred population in the course of American territorial expansion. To this extent, therefore, Afro-Americans, Native-Americans, and

Mexican-Americans share a similar status as national minorities, the acid test of their status being the manner of their respective incorporation into the American polity whether through enslavement, territorial assimilation, or subjugation and expropriation. Finally, the status of the Afro-American group is national to the extent that it is co-terminous with the national parameters of the society (not restricted to regional peculiarity) and has historically been integrated into the establishment of the nation's political framework.

It is therefore the contention of this writer that Afro-Americans are first and foremost a national minority in America whose very status has forced them, at various times punctuating the transition of American society from one stage to another, to seek to formalise their anomalous position as a nationality without a nation by having recourse to Africa as the source of their political emancipation from American racism. We shall see later how this political factor has been operative in linking Afro-Americans to Africa, and, correspondingly, Africans to Afro-Americans, in a highly salutary embrace for working out mutually satisfactory, though at times mutually discordant, objectives. On the other hand, the attempt to formalise their national status by recourse to Africa, though Africa was not the source of that national status but only the means whereby it might be validated and liberated with cultural and political sanction, should be seen as the problematic encompassing the various African-related options of improving their status which Afro-Americans have been pursuing from the latter eighteenth-century down to the present. It certainly cannot be denied, within the last decade and a half, the status of Afro-Americans as a national group, despite the enormously

increased assimilation which they have experienced within all branches of American institutional life and social organization, has become a deeply pronounced aspect of general American awareness. To the extent that the enhanced status which Afro-Americans have attained within American society has also brought with it a distinct awareness, not only among white Americans but black Americans as well, of their distinctiveness as a national group, to the same extent has the contribution which Africa's rise, in the same period, to a position of critical importance in world politics been a seminal factor.

At the same time that Afro-Americans are seen as a national minority, however, it must also be stressed that as a group, depending on the particular level at which they interact with the larger society, whether in the realm of political representation, cultural expression, or economic advancement, they exhibit many, if not all, the features of an alienated ethnic group, a submerged caste, and an exploited class. It all depends on the particular vantage-point from which distinct social processes are apprehended. The challenge is not to let our point of vision obscure the other important dimensions so as to distort our perception of the group's overall social character. This is a particularly difficult undertaking when there are so many divergent aspects of the group's collective position to be analysed. The danger if we do not sustain the view of the totality of the Afro-American experience, however, and grasp the several intersecting points through which it is united with the larger American society, is not only in a partial and hence imperfect rendering of that experience, but most importantly it seriously risks distorting the social

complexity of America as a structured whole. Hence, the applicability of ethnicity or caste or class analysis is not to be denied when looking at the status of Afro-Americans, which are each in their own way relevant to particular modes and levels of social interaction with the wider American society. Nonetheless, they must be seen, in this writer's opinion, as resting upon and as being so many different ways of expressing the more fundamental status of Afro-Americans as a national minority group within American society, a status which assures to it specific qualities which are not to be confused with ethnicity per se or class per se or caste per se. Without some basic understanding of this national minority status of Afro-Americans, then, it becomes impossible to situate the national character of the Afro-American struggle against American racism, and beyond that the national basis of its transnational linkages with Africa, for it is America and Africa that in combination have nationalized the Afro-American.

It would also be pertinent, at this point, to call attention to the significant fact that, in the evolution of these transnational linkages between Afro-Americans and Africa, equal weight must be given to developments concurrently underway in Africa. These developments, it would seem, have governed to a large extent the shape and character of the Afro-American relationship to Africa. This point cannot be stressed enough, though, unfortunately, it appears to have been almost entirely overlooked in the scholarly literature, with the result that we have tended to see the Afro-American as the sole determinant in the devising of his chosen role in regard to Africa. While it is certainly true that some things have remained fairly

constant throughout the long history of Afro-American contact with Africa, particularly at the symbolic level, such as one finds in the nearly continuous reassertion of the Biblical prophesy: "Princes shall come out of Egypt and Ethiopia shall soon stretch forth her hand unto God" (Psalm 68:31), the content of the linkages has always reflected the situation in Africa at particular points in time. That is not to say that the Afro-American has not been free to decide which of the many possible situations in Africa he will choose to relate to, thus retaining considerable freedom of action for himself, but it still remains true that, having once decided upon his course to be pursued, it is the African reality, or his own interpretation of what that reality means, that determines the shape of his response.

The reason why it is terribly important to grasp the dynamic role of Africa in the Afro-American negotiation of linkages is due to the key that it provides as to the historically variable ways in which the changing situation of Africa has influenced the response of Afro-Americans. Simply put, Afro-Americans today cannot relate to Africa in many of the ways that they once did and which Africans then may have found perfectly acceptable. In part, this is due to the myriad changes that have been wrought in the Afro-American contemporary condition from what it was, for instance, at the turn of the century; equally important, however, is the fact that Africa today is vastly different from the situation that she once found herself cast in. Likewise, it is the present reality of Africa that has set the parameters by which Afro-American behaviour in relation to Africa is cast. Where, as has sometimes been the case, such behaviour has flown in the face of this present reality, the result has usually been rejection from one or other side of the relationship.

We can see how this pattern of changing situations has influenced the Afro-American reaction to Africa. The establishment of Sierra Leone as a "Province of Freedom" in 1787 and the creation of Liberia in 1820 set the stage at the time, and for a long time afterward, for almost all Afro-American repatriation projects, though the creation of Sierra Leone and Liberia in the first instance was certainly not the idea of Afro-Americans themselves. Again, the partition of Africa in 1885 and the consequent colonial subjugation of the entire continent to European Empires resulted in the very rapid expansion of Afro-American missionary endeavours by which it was hoped that Africa could be redeemed and Afro-Americans vindicated as part of the working out of a larger "providential design" by which Afro-Americans, equipped with the advanced culture of their slave-masters, should return to "civilize" and "christianize" their less fortunate African brothers and sisters. From that point onward, the idea of African improvement became one of the key areas in which Afro-Americans could demonstrate the success of their own programs of social and cultural uplift. It was but a short step from this position to the view that the political deliverance of Africa from the abuses of European colonialism would come from the assertion and articulation by Afro-Americans of African grievances as well as from the secularised political consciousness that Afro-Americans could impart to their African brethren. This was the governing conception behind the political rhetoric of the Marcus Garvey program of African nationalism as well as the many Pan-African Congress meetings that W.E.B. DuBois set in motion after 1900. The European regimes in Africa were not slow, however, to recognise the threat that this

hostile alliance represented to the stability of the colonial system and by about 1910 Afro-American missionaries to Africa were being systematically excluded.

Africa's position as the recipient of Afro-American cultural and political advances, however, would undergo drastic revision after the end of the Second World War. It was at this time that the modern movement and mobilization for Africa's political emancipation from European colonialism burst upon the world scene and with startling rapidity led in little over a decade to the emergence by 1960 of the following independent African States: Morocco, Sudan, Tunisia (in 1956), Ghana (in 1957), Guinea (in 1958), and Cameroun, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo (Brazzaville), Zaire, Dahomey, Gabon, Ivory Coast, Malagasy Republic, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Togo and Upper Volta (all in 1960, truly the anni mirabili of Independence in Africa). In their footsteps rapidly followed Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia, all of them important African countries with outstanding political leaders.

If this rapid ascent of African States to international significance would have a qualitatively important impact upon the status and identity of Afro-Americans within American society, it is no less true that it meant the final emancipation of Africa from the historic tutelage of Afro-Americans. It meant that Africa would thereafter have to be seen and related to by Afro-Americans as now a completely equal party to any exchanges; in some important respects, it could even be said that Afro-Americans were now the principal beneficiaries in political terms of the emergence of Africa.

It is this novel situation in Africa of independent political

statehood that Afro-Americans confront in attempting to sustain old linkages or in forging new relationships that grow out of the specific circumstances and needs of the present reality. Indeed, as we shall shortly see, Africans have today moved into dominant positions in areas that had once traditionally been almost privileged domains of Afro-American leadership. Finally, the discovery by Africans of their own path to development, and as a consequence the clarity that such discoveries bring about the reality of their previous colonial condition, has begun to provide the basis for the evolution of new perspectives through which Afro-Americans have been trying to view their own condition within American society. This is almost a complete reversal of the previous terms out of which the historic Afro-American relationship to Africa was structured.

The importance of recognizing the fact of changing situations on <u>both</u> sides of the relationship binding Afro-Americans and Africa has a wider application than the specific linkages that we are examining here. For the very same principle can also be seen to have been operating in the transnational ethnic linkages which have emerged in America. The assertion of cultural self-identity for any of the several distinct groups that make up the ethnic bloc of the American population, whether they be Russians, Greeks, Slovaks, Irish, Jews, etc., is influenced to a significant degree by the changing situation of their respective parent polities, which in turn shapes the parameters of political action by which these groups come to identify themselves in transnational ethnic terms. This characteristic of reciprocal change is what, moreover, makes the scope of the linkages between ethnic groups and their parent cultures definably transnational.

In this setting, therefore, transnational cannot mean one national entity asserting ties that move uni-directionally. Rather, transnational must mean two separate though related entities, regardless of how segmented one of these entities might happen to be, creating the conditions under which changing means of identification are found in response to changing realities in each of the respective entities. Otherwise, what we shall end up with is an abstractly posited a priori pattern of ethnic transfers across formalistically described political boundaries.

We can start to solve the dilemma caused by this kind of ethnic abstractionism by making a clear distinction between a cultural perspective in the narrow sense and a social-relational perspective in the sense of constantly changing modes of social interaction. The overly holistic view of culture can thereby be situated into a dynamic context that identifies the forces which activate particular cultural inheritances or adaptations from their subjective status and bring these into play as markers for guiding and orienting behavior in the process of social interaction. This distinction between the subjectively cultural and social-relational has been excellently drawn by Professor Sidney W. Mintz, one of the leading American scholars of the anthropology of Afro-American cultural adaptations within the framework of New World slave-plantation societies. It is well worth quoting from Professor Mintz on this subject in spite of the unusual length of the quotation:

> The argument here, then, is that we must conceptualize Afro-American cultures not simply as historically derived bodies of materials, as patterns of and for behavior, but also as materials actively employed by organized human groupings in particular social contexts. Without the dimension

> of human action, of choices made and pursued - of maneuver - culture could be regarded as a lifeless collection of habits, superstitions, and artifacts. Instead, we see that culture is used; and that any analysis of its use immediately brings into view the arrangements of persons in social groups, for whom cultural forms confirm, reinforce, maintain, change, or deny particular arrangements of status, power, and identity.[1]

Professor Mintz continues further in the same vein:

> It is essential, finally, to take note of the relevance of cultural origins to political ideologies and ethnic consciousness. Stress has been laid here on the difference between what people actually do and their expression of what they do as a measure of their identity. This difference becomes particularly acute in political situations in which people struggle to define themselves vis-a-vis some other society or social group. In the simplest terms, people can be rallied to a political position in terms of perceived needs and goals, and this commonly occurs around some set of values or beliefs. Political solidarity requires the expression of a common interest, at least for specific purposes, and such an interest can be made to adhere to the perception of a common past, a common consciousness, or a common code of behavior. Culture, in the widest sense, is a repository of practices, values, and ideas into which political leaders can dip in creating loyalties and infusing their organizations with purpose. But such undertakings must build on felt needs and, in growing, on the awakening of like needs in others.[2]

An excellent example of the way in which the force of culture touches the social-relational aspect of Afro-American life, in which explicit cultural change is pursued in the social redeployment of certain individuals within the group, can be seen by looking at the recent founding of the "Yoruba Kingdom", Oyo Tungi, in South Carolina. A particularly revealing description of the new assemblage was provided by one newspaper account. The account revealed the following information:

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[1]Sidney W. Mintz, Caribbean Transformations (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company, 1974), p. 18.

[2]Ibid., p. 29.

Oyo Tungi, the Yoruba Kingdom, is a back-country village of some 50 black separatists in South Carolina. Among other things, they believe that racial integration "is a suicide course." And so they have gathered here to pursue an African-style culture under the tutelage of spirit-worshipping, 46-year-old King Kabeyesi, self-proclaimed ruler of this "someday-great nation" and a former commercial artist from Detroit.

The village covers 10 acres, purchased for $500 a year ago (1973) after several relocations. King Kabeyesi founded the settlement as "the only village in North America built by priests of the Orisha-voodoo gods."

And its early settlers had considered returning to Africa; . . . But King Kabeyesi and his followers, because they believed in voodoo, decided that the souls of dead blacks needed a spiritual home in the U.S.

The life they chose is their interpretation of West African tribalism. Every day at 8 a.m., a drummer beats a big, red-and-yellow oil drum to wake the village for morning worship of ancestral gods. Part of the workday is spent caring for chickens and goats, which provide the meat supply and serve in voodoo sacrificial ceremonies.

Villagers pursue a "natural way of life," which includes polygamy. The king has only four wives now, but he has had as many as seven. Marriage is easy. A man chooses a wife, gives her a $50 dowry and presents his "district chief" and the king with a bottle of gin each. Children are given African names and, like the rest of the villagers, are tribally marked with three razor slashes on each cheek.

In the course of an audience, King Kabeyesi says he believes that "blacks will come here in droves when the American system crumbles".[3]

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[3]Pamela G. Hollie, "Search for 'Soul': Black Separatists Get New Followers, Create New Towns", Wall Street Journal, July 31, 1974, pp. 1, 23. For an extensive description of an earlier New York-based "Yoruba Temple" which dates back to 1967, see Robert G. Weisbord, Ebony Kinship: Africa, Africans, and the Afro-American (Westport, Conn., Greenwood Press, 1973), pp. 199-201. The leader of the New York "Yorubas" is Ofuntola Oseijeman Adefunmi. Significantly, Weisbord points out: "Quintessentially cultural nationalists, the Yoruba leadership is also political-minded. Adefunmi is a believer in Africanizing politics along with everything else. Therefore early in Yoruba Temple history, he brought into being the Alajo party. Its twin purposes were to train black leaders and to petition the United States government to indemnify black people. Almost nothing has been heard of the party since its formation more than a decade ago." (pp.200-

There can be no doubt about the powerful attraction which religion offers Afro-Americans as a principal avenue for rediscovering, or trying to discover, some primodial cultural identity in their African past. Besides the "Yoruba" manifestations in New York and South Carolina that we have described, there has also been an unusually interesting current exemplifying the way in which African and Afro-American cultural linkages have sought a certain reciprocity in the contemporary period. In 1972 a group of Afro-American visitors to Ghana attended one of that country's main fetish shrines, the shrine of Akonnedi at Larteh. The account of the encounter is extremely revealing:

> Some thirty-one (Afro-Americans) were initiated into the shrine in 1972 by the high priestess, Nana Abena Oparebea. The group was led by a dance teacher from New York named Yaw Opare Dinizolo, who claimed to have traced his descent from the priestess's family. He further claimed to have come originally from near Aburi, and that his great-grandfather was a great priest, Atwidan, who had never died but ascended to heaven, casting his sword to the ground, where it was still stuck.
>
> Those who had seen the Americans drumming and dancing were struck by their skill. Some of the girls, said African onlookers, had cut tribal marks on their faces and bodies, and their dancing certainly looked authentic to them, although the singing was somewhat harder to decipher.
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> When Nana Abena visited America in 1969, Dinizolo said: "It was just like the miracle of Jesus' walk on the sea. All black America was shook up." A temple was established, the Bosom Dzemowodzi, and soon it claimed to have 250 adherents worshipping the Larteh shrine in the United States.[4]

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201). It is just possible that the "Yoruba Temple" of New York may have been transmuted into "Oyo Tungi" of South Carolina, particularly as Weisbord informs us that the New York leader Adefunmi was, like King Kabeyesi, originally a resident of Detroit.

[4]David Jenkins, Black Zion: Africa, Imagined and Real, as Seen by Today's Blacks (New York and London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1975), p. 153. An Afro-Jamaican scholar of African folk medicinal

A somewhat earlier experiment in the creation of an African settlement by Afro-Americans ended in tragic failure within a very short time of its founding in 1967. Once again, however, religion provided a principal source of inspiration for the would-be settlers, who numbering two hundred or more, described themselves as "Black Hebrews" or "Black Israelites", believing themselves descendants of Abraham--who, they claimed, was black--and whose ancestors were dispersed up the Nile by persecution and sold into slavery. According to one recent account of the founding of the experimental community:

> The group of Black Hebrew fundamentalists gathered in Chicago in the early 1960's. Their original idea was to found a rural community in the United States. Then the desire for a Return took hold. There was considerable disagreement over whether this return should be to Israel or to Ethiopia. Finally the African faction prevailed. . . they believed that they would not be given visas for

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healing has described also his own visit to the Akonnedi Healing Center of Larteh "where he was introduced to the single most important traditional healer known in the nation, Nana Oparebea, the High Priestess of this Center." He continues: "Her influence extends over the population from the former Kwame Nkrumah to the lowliest peasant of Ghana. Here the author observed the herbs and their preparation and was informed that 99 different herbs were used in the baths. Along with healing, the Center was a training school for future herbalists, both men and women.", Leonard Barrett, "The Portrait of a Jamaican Healer: African Medical Lore in the Caribbean", Caribbean Quarterly 19 (September 1973): 15-16. In the period immediately following Ghana's independence in 1957, many Afro-Americans were inspired to migrate and settle in that country and to contribute their skills to the development of Africa. Jenkins informs us of the following data on the remarkable increase since that time in Afro-American travel-visitors to Ghana: "From the negligible number of black American tourists visiting Ghana up to 1970, the figures shot up to between six and seven thousand in the summer of 1972, and were still rising dramatically. By 1973, they represented ten per cent of all tourism to Ghana.", (Jenkins, op. cit., p. 127). In 1972 the organization of black American travel agents, the Inter-American Travel Agents Society, held its 14th annual convention in Abidjan, Ivory Coast, and, in an interview, the group's president, Earl Kennedy, disclosed:

Ethiopia, so it was decided to emigrate to Liberia instead.[5] By the time that this account was written, only eight approximately of the original group had remained in Liberia in an odd assortment of occupations from selling ice-cream to teaching self-defence. One of the original group who has adamantly refused to give up related the experiences of the "Israelites"in a revealing interview:

> . . . I came here on July 26th, 1967, and I was the first of the group. We thought two hundred would come, but through the rest of the year, many more than that came, and many left. We bought (sic) three hundred acres of land at fifty cents an acre right here in Gbatala (more than eighty miles from the Liberian capital, Monrovia). We also had a subsidy (of fifty dollars a month for every passport holder). We made a lot of mistakes. We came at the wrong time of the year. We relied too much on money from the United States, charity collections and so on, and bad publicity dried that up. We mostly lived in tents but some people built small huts. The hang-ups came through the culture difference. This was the whole reason why most couldn't stay in Liberia. . . I don't regret that most people went back. But American society has created a monster, a person who can't do anything for himself, or build his own house.
>
> As soon as we moved out of Monrovia we realized we had no independence . . .
>
> There was too much concentration on politics, and that created cliques and we had, at the same time, no programme for orienting ourselves into the culture. Nobody spoke Kpelle, of course. We came to realize something very remarkable about the true relation between the slave and the free

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"We brought our 14th convention to Africa because more and more black people want to travel to Africa . . . The black thrust toward Africa is real--you find black groups of the elderly, the professionals, the civil servants and even students are all trying to book a trip to Africa back home to their source," (Thomas A. Johnson, "More U.S. Blacks Take African Trip," The New York Times, October 22, 1972).

[5]Jenkins, op. cit., p. 247. See also New York Amsterdam News, December 23, 1967; The New York Times, November 6 and January 18, 1968, and November 12, 1969. There still exists a small flicker of interest within the black community in African repatriation, which, in the main, has been the result of such organizations as the "African Nationalist Pioneer Movement" in New York, and the "African-American Repatriation Association" in Philadelphia.

> man. We imagined we would be the free ones and would liberate the enslaved Africans. It was quite the opposite. The Kpelle man is truly independent . . . We realized that there had been patterns of know-how that had been formed in us in the States that were wrong, that what we had been made into by acquiring this know-how was completely alien to Africa. Neither us nor the Africans were able readily to change . . . . There was a constant flow of people going back to America. About fifty per cent went back to the States.[6]

Apart from the few who remained in Liberia, the remaining half of the "Black Hebrews"migrated to Israel in 1969 and they asked Israeli authorities to be treated as Jewish immigrants under the Law of the Return. This second exodus was no more successful, however, despite an initial acceptance and settlement at Dimona, one of the growing industrial towns in the Negev Desert. After the arrival of a second group from Liberia and the United States, problems with local residents in Dimona arose and they failed to satisfy the Israeli Supreme Court that they qualified for immigrant status "since they did not prove they were born of Jewish mothers, or that they had been properly converted (according to the religious law of Halacha)".[7] The hopeful members of the "Black Hebrew Israelite Nation", after the arrest of several members and their accusation of "complete racist oppression" against the Israeli Government, found themselves finally deported.

The link between the cultural-affective, on the one hand, and

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[6]Jenkins, op. cit., pp. 248-249.

[7]Ibid., p. 251. The leader of the faction that eventually migrated to Israel was Ben Ami Carter, a former Chicago bus driver. For additional reports on the travails of the "Black Hebrews" in Israel see The New York Times, November 23, 1969, August 31, 1971, and October 8, 1971. See also the in-depth interview of Hoyt Fuller with Prince Asiel Ben-Israel, "The Original Hebrew Israelite Nation", Black World (May 1975), 62-85.

the social-political, on the other, through which the attempted restoration of African cultural distinctiveness finds expression in Afro-American political objectives, can also be observed in Maulana Ron Karenga "Kawaida" or Black Value System whose seven principles are symbolized as UMOJA (Unity), KUJICHAGULIA (Self-Determination), UJIMA (Collective Work and Responsibility), UJAMAA (Co-operative Economics), NIA (Purpose), KUUMBA (Creativity), and IMANI (Faith). The significance attributed to the "Kawaida" has been explained by Imamu Ameer Baraka (LeRoi Jones), one of the outstanding disciples of Karenga, in the following terms:

> Kawaida, or the doctrine of Maulana Karenga, is the measure of that "better" life. It is African, because we are African, no matter that we have been trapped in the West these few hundred years , , , , The Nguzo Saba says our purpose must be the rebuilding of our people to their traditional greatness . . . . We can begin to build. We must build black institutions. In all the different aspects of culture. Political, Religious, Social, Economic, Ethical, Creative, Historical, institutions, all based on a value system that is beneficial to black people.
>
> All these institutions will be alternatives to the Euro-American or Negro institutions that exist, but will exist in their own right as expressions of the black sensibility, and not merely as reactions to an alien sensibility.[8]

This new alternative sensibility of which Baraka speaks became, after 1965, an unparalleled eruption of African consciousness among Afro-Americans by which large numbers of them literally clothed themselves in African symbols, whence the near-ritualistic adornment of bubas, djellabas, caftans, agbadas, and geles. When this African-style

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[8]Imamu Ameer Baraka (LeRoi Jones), "A Black Value System", The Black Scholar 1 (November 1969): 54-60. It should be noted that Baraka has since renounced his earlier cultural nationalism and turned toward the espousal of scientific socialism doctrines.

clothing was coupled with the natural Afro-hair style, the very physical appearance of Afro-Americans changed dramatically to fit their new politically nationalist mood and to confirm in loud tones the injunction uttered by James Brown, "I'm black and I'm proud". Black was, indeed, now beautiful.

Further note of the pervasive attraction of the cultural-affective dimension of African symbolism was also to be found in the widespread protest on the part of Afro-American youngsters for Swahili-instruction to be established as part of the school curriculum. This coincided with the progressive incorporation of Swahili words and phrases into the lexicon of Afro-American ideology as in HARAMBEE ("let us all pull together"), UHURU ("freedom"), UJAMAA ("co-operation"). There was also a fairly largescale naming of things in this process of linguistic discovery, examples of which were Antioch College's Afro-American Studies Institute being named NYUMBA UMOJA ("Unity House"), and the University of Pennsylvania's Black Center being designated the NYUMBA ya UJAMAA ("House of the Family").

The affective cultural tie translated itself directly into an upsurge of new expressive arts and groups that sprang up within Afro-American communities nationwide. Examples of this regroupment were the New African Company of Boston; the Bodacious Buggerrilla, the Mafundi Institute and the Performing Arts Society of Los Angeles; the Fire Company in Birmingham, Alabama; Kahero Cultural Gallery of Richmond, Virginia; Black Theater Troupe and Umba Ujaama in Phoenix, Arizona; Rapa House in Detroit; and the Kuumba Workshop in Chicago.[9]

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[9]Paul Delaney, "Black Culture Seeks Strength at the Community Level", The New York Times, February 22, 1975.

Finally, one catches a vivid representation of the new African symbolism at work in Afro-American consciousness in the poetic motif of the widely-acclaimed stage-play "The River Niger":

> I am the River Niger!
> I came to the cloudy Mississippi
> Over keels of incomprehensible woe.
> I ran way to the Henry Hudson
> Under the sails of ragged hope.
> I am the River Niger,
> Transplanted to Harlem
> From the Harlem River Drive.
> Hear me my children - hear my waters!
> I sleep in your veins.

There have been within the cultural arena important relationships which have steadily emerged linking Afro-Americans and Africa in the last several years. At the personal request of President Sekou Toure of the Republic of Guinea, the famed Afro-American entertainer, Harry Belafonte, became the cultural advisor for that nation's future artistic endeavors. Plans have now been drawn up, after several trips by Belafonte to study Guinea's artistic life, for a vast performing-arts center for the people of Guinea.

In the area of film-making, Ossie Davis recently directed and filmed in Nigeria Countdown At Kusini, the first American film to be shot entirely in Africa by black American professionals. The movie was also financed primarily by Delta Sigma Theta sorority, a black women's organization.[10] Again, in the course of its American visit in 1973, a six-man delegation of African film producers from the

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[10]"Countdown At Kusini", Ebony (April 1976): 90-94. The musical score for the film, which describes a revolution in a fictitious African country, was written by the African musician Manu Dibango, noted for his multi-million selling record, Soul Makossa. The account of the film's production and its problems revealed a particularly ironic situation when it stated: ". . . the Nigerian Department

Federation of Pan-African Cinema (FEPACI), held discussions with Gordon Parks, the black American film director, on the possibility of setting up "an intercontinental organization of Africans and Americans that would handle their own film distribution". Parks told his visitors: "Our biggest problem has been just to break into the industry, to try to get a toe-hold . . . At least you have an organization, and that's far ahead of us in thought and deed. First we have to get our people to think right - then perhaps we can form an Afro-American organization like yours". The report of the meeting, however, drew attention to the dissimilar attitude that separated African film-makers from their Afro-American counterparts:

> In the Africans' discussion with the American director, all expressed the sense of a basic difference between African and American approaches to film-making. Although black American movies are being filmed with increasing frequency in Africa, the Americans appear more interested in aiming for film formulas that will make money, it was felt. The Africans saw themselves as aiming, more idealistically, at raising the level of their countrymen's national consciousness.[11]

This latter point exemplified very well the underlying tension in any mutual cultural endeavor, or other endeavors for that matter, that

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of Information objected to certain parts of the original script of Countdown, featuring jazz musician Red Salter (Greg Morris), breezing into Fahari like any average American, helping the poor Africans out of their difficulties, then ending up as the solo hero. 'We'd like for it to be a little more equal,' explained a Nigerian official. 'It's an African revolution and I think the Africans can do pretty well in regards to our own welfare.' Thus, in the rewritten script an African revolutionary sarcastically reminds the Afro-American hero that he has 'been away from Africa for a little while - 400 years, isn't it?' (ibid., p. 92).

[11]Rudy Johnson, "African Film Makers Seek Aid Here", The New York Times, May 21, 1973, p. 42. The Federation of Pan-African Cinema is a thirty-one nation professional federation with membership of the Organization of African Unity.

brings Afro-Americans into working relationships with Africans, though such problems are not in themselves absolute barriers to cultural co-operation between the two groups of people. It merely points up the differing realities governing the two widely separated sets of circumstances and the different ways in which they go about trying to resolve them in their particular interest.

The twin appeal of African repatriation and inferred citizenship, which has been a constant of Afro-American transnational expression, was pointed up in relation to Kenya during the final visit to America of one of its major leaders, Tom Mboya, the Minister of Economic Planning and Development in Kenya. There were two distinct though related aspects to the events surrounding this break-out of the question of an Afro-American return to Africa, one involving the Kenyan Parliament and the other an address by Tom Mboya before an Afro-American audience. Robert Weisbord has graphically described the latter incident:

> . . . The time was March 1969, and the place the Countee Cullen branch of the New York Public Library in Harlem. Mboya, who was shortly to fall victim to an assassin's bullet in Nairobi on July 5, 1969, had delivered a one-hour address on the formidable economic and social problems that beset Africa in the post-independence era. Those remarks caused no difficulty. The audience seemed receptive to Mboya. But when he briefly gave his views on the movement of Afro-Americans to Africa, he stirred up a hornet's nest. Mboya said that he did not believe in such a movement because "we should not run away from the struggle". The Kenyan added: "I also believe that the cosmopolitan atmosphere which has been established in Africa and elsewhere must be established all over. Africa has shown the white nations that there is no place for racialism. We are, I think, we can pride ourselves with a Government . . ." At that juncture he was abruptly cut off by the audience which was crowded with members of the African Nationalist Pioneer Movement and other black nationalists . . . Pandemonium reigned. There were boos and other expressions of displeasure. Eggs were hurled at Mboya by one uninhibited critic . . . Order was not fully

restored until the police arrived.[12]

In a subsequent article in The New York Times Magazine, Tom Mboya was able to explain his views with greater freedom and at length. He claimed:

> Perhaps the desire to return to Africa is so unrealistic because it is based upon despair. I do not mean by this that African states should refuse black Americans who wish to expatriate. On the contrary, those who want to make a home in Africa are free to do so. There are many opportunities in the new nations, particularly for trained and skilled persons. They could help us enormously during our period of development, and we welcome our American cousins to come and work among us.
>
> What is unrealistic about the proposal is the ease with which some black Americans think that they can throw off their American culture and become African . . . . The black American should look to Africa for guidance - and for a chance to give guidance - but not for escape. He must merge his blackness with his citizenship as an American, and the result will be dignity and liberation.[13]

This whole encounter was considerably sharpened and given special significance since it came in the immediate aftermath of a legislative proposal that had been tabled a few months before, in October 1968, in the National Assembly of Kenya by the Hon. Mark Mwithaga. The motion called upon the Government of Kenya to view the Afro-American and Afro-Caribbean populations as part of the indigenous African population "who did not leave the continent of their own accord, but as slaves". Mwithaga thus argued that the Government should "A) treat them as the dispossessed sons and daughters of Africa, B) introduce a bill for amendment to the Constitution to grant them

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[12]Weisbord, Ebony Kinship, p. 156. Weisbord also provides an excellent summary of the stormy response to Mboya's remarks that followed the meeting, pp. 157-159.

[13]Tom Mboya, "The American Negro Cannot Look to Africa for an Escape", reprinted in Tom Mboya, The Challenge of Nationhood (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1970), pp. 221-232.

absolute and automatic citizenship in Kenya and, C) ask the Organization of African Unity countries to do likewise".[14]

A full-scale debate on Mwithaga's motion ensued but in the end it was rejected by Parliamentary vote.[15] The proposal itself was, doubtless, prompted by the low-ebb that the racial situation affecting Afro-Americans had reached by the fall of 1968 as a consequence of the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., on April 4, 1968, and the large-scale riots that swept through American cities in its wake. Indeed, it was significant that this situation confronting the Afro-American freedom movement represented a major turning-point in the growth of African consciousness on the part of black Americans. The Kenyan legislator's proposal, therefore, must be seen as reflecting in an important way a continuity of linked perceptions that have tried to relate the Afro-American condition to Africa and vice versa.

The idea of possible African/American citizenship for Afro-Americans who desire to obtain it was resurrected in yet another form in November, 1972, with the visit to Liberia of a delegation headed

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[14]Kenya National Assembly, Senate. Official Report, Vol. 16, 1968, p. 1650. Reprinted in Weisbord, op. cit., p. 160.

[15]For a summary of the debate and its outcome, see Weisbord, pp. 160-162. Weisbord also relates the continuation of this idea in the following incident: "In 1970 when the Pan-African Students Organization and the Students Organization for Black Unity convened at Howard University, a resolution was adopted which called inter alia for a treaty to be signed between African governments and the United States government to guarantee all human rights to Africans born in this country, i.e., to Afro-Americans. Even if the United States were unwilling to sign such a treaty, African governments were to grant automatic citizenship to all diaspora Africans. No person of African descent desirous of 'Coming Back Home' should be denied citizenship. Travel documents and transportation were to be provided by the Organization of African Unity", p. 163.

by the Reverend Jesse Jackson, the leader of Chicago-based "People United to Save Humanity" (Operation PUSH), and himself an important earlier disciple of the later Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Jenkins relates the details of Rev. Jackson's visit and discussions with Liberian officials:

> . . . His group had a series of talks with the President, William Tolbert, and a number of proposals were published. The Ministry of Information in Monrovia described the talks as "perhaps the most significant development ever in relations between an African Government and black Americans". It was proposed that incentives be offered to black American businessmen to invest in Liberia. In return Jackson would ensure that outlets for Liberian-manufactured goods would be created in America. Jackson said on television: "It is high time for the nearly thirty million American blacks, who have a gross national product of some forty-two thousand million dollars, to start moving from 'lip service' to 'ship service' with Africa, which means black Americans buying products made in Africa, in Liberia in this case, and to exchanging a variety of skills with African countries." The possibility of dual Liberian and American citizenship was also mooted. Even more tempting was a proposal from a group of American real estate developers to build fifty thousand houses in Liberia, to be offered as second homes for black Americans.[16]

So far as can be learnt, these ambitious negotiations for Afro-American "ship service" to Liberia have not borne any fruit for its sponsors and now appear to have been quietly forgotten. Jenkins disclosed what some of the difficulties were, as perceived by Liberians:

> . . . The problem was to enable well-to-do black Americans to have this facility (of dual citizenship), but not white Americans (which, in any case, is probably contrary to the American Constitution) and certainly not any poverty-stricken

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[16]Jenkins, Black Zion, pp. 253-254. For a critical statement on the proposal, see J.K. Obatala, "Liberia: The Meaning of 'Dual Citizenship' ", The Black Scholar 4 (July-August 1973): 16-19. It must be admitted that Rev. Jackson's notion of "ship service", whether deliberate or not, summons up distinct images of Marcus Garvey's earlier "Black Star Line" colonization attempt in Liberia, something that the Liberian Government at that time stoutly resisted.

> brethren from further north in West Africa. "It was all much too vague", he (an official who had been closely concerned in the negotiations) said. But he added: "We're always interested in investment . . ." A senior official at the Liberian State Department vouchsafed: "I don't think it'll come to anything at all. Black Americans lack the pioneering spirit".[17]

Whatever the truth of that particular statement might be, the fact remains that Afro-Americans have actively pursued the possibility of locating some form of African "citizenship" by which to try to alleviate their domestic racial condition in America. And although they have met nothing but failure in this pursuit, the mere fact of its recurrence attests to the sense of political incompleteness which Afro-Americans have historically sought to bridge through political links with the African continent. In this context, "citizenship" represents only one of the many forms which this underlying search for some measure of independence within the American social order has assumed. This historic recourse to Africa represents, however, a double-pronged initiative which has the potential for not only "nationalizing" the position of Afro-Americans confronted with American racism, but also, and just as importantly, for "internationalizing" their condition in the hope of exposing it before world

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[17]Jenkins, op. cit., p. 254. It should be noted that in 1973 a "Pan African Business Center" was formed, a nonprofit organization supported by black and white Americans, which in November 1974, at its conference in Atlanta, was reported to have generated $50-million of new investment. The Center's initial principal funding source was the United States Department of Commerce. One newspaper report of its 1975 conference points out: "Recently, the Center has gained increasing support from business and foundations. Among major sponsors are the Chase Manhattan Bank and the Coca-Cola Export Corporation, as well as black-owned enterprises such as the Johnson Products Company, and organizations such as the Black Economic Research Center", Brendan Jones, "African-Caribbean Trade Spur Is Sought", The New York Times, May 29, 1975, pp. 47-48. President of the Pan African Business Center is Mr. Darwin W. Bolden.

opinion. The most articulate spokesman of this double-edged strategy, but one who did not live long enough to see it implemented, was Malcolm X. In the case of Malcolm's initiative, however, the notion of some formal "citizenship" was shelved in favor of a more fluid relationship that sought to situate the Afro-American in a common African political community through which his condition in America could receive some measure of protection that comes with a common nationality, even if the nationality in question was more a historical-racial rather than a strictly juridical one. Malcolm X advanced this thesis in his ambitious challenge which he presented before the Organization of African Unity summit conference in Cairo, Egypt, in July 1964. Malcolm was accepted as an observer representing his recently formed "Organization of Afro-American Unity", and in this capacity he was permitted to submit to the delegates an eight-page memorandum which he delivered to delegates on July 17th. Following are excerpts from this important document:

> "Since the 22 million of us were originally Africans, who are now in America not by choice but only by a cruel accident in our history, we strongly believe that African problems are our problems and our problems are African problems.
>
> "Your Excellencies: We also believe that as heads of the Independent African states you are the shepherd of all African peoples everywhere, whether they are still at home on the mother continent or have been scattered abroad.
>
> "If the United States Supreme Court justice, Arthur Goldberg, a few weeks ago, could find legal grounds to threaten to bring Russia before the United Nations and charge her with violating the human rights of less than three million Russian Jews, what makes our African brothers hesitate to bring the United States government before the United Nations and charge her with violating the human rights of 22 million African-Americans?

"The Organization of Afro-American Unity, in cooperation with a coalition of other Negro leaders and organizations, has decided to elevate our freedom struggle above the domestic level of civil rights. We intend to 'internationalize' it by placing it at the level of human rights. Our freedom struggle for human dignity is no longer confined to the domestic jurisdiction of the United States government.

"We beseech the independent African states to help us bring our problem before the United Nations, on the grounds that the United States government is morally incapable of protecting the lives and property of 22 million African-Americans. And on the grounds that our deteriorating plight is definitely becoming a threat to world peace.

"In the interests of world peace and security, we beseech the heads of the independent African states to recommend an immediate investigation into our problem by the United Nations Commission on Human Rights."[18]

In the light of what we now know about the efficacy of that international body in settling internal disputes within and between

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[18]The full text of the appeal is reprinted in George Breitman, ed., Malcolm X Speaks (New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1965), pp. 72-77. Speaking before a Nigerian student audience at the University of Ibadan Malcolm X expanded on this theme as follows: "I said that just as the American Jew is in political, economic, and cultural harmony with world Jewry, I was convinced that it was time for all Afro-Americans to join the world's Pan-Africanists. I said that physically we Afro-Americans might remain in America, fighting for our Constitutional rights, but that philosophically and culturally we Afro-Americans badly needed to 'return' to Africa - and to develop a working unity in the framework of Pan-Africanism", The Autobiography of Malcolm X (New York: Grove Press, 1965), p. 350. Malcolm, in referring to "the framework of Pan-Africanism", would have been conscious of the special legacy which Afro-Americans had inherited of the historic Pan-African gatherings which they had helped sponsor, starting in 1900 in London, and again in 1919, 1921, 1923, 1927, and culminating in Manchester, England, in 1945. Contemporary Afro-American attempts to revive this Pan-African "framework" of deliberation are to be found in the "Congress of African Peoples" held in Atlanta, Georgia, in September, 1970, and the "Sixth Pan-African Congress", held in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania, in June, 1974. For a report of the former, see Imamu Amiri Baraka (LeRoi Jones), ed., African Congress: A Documentary of the First Modern Pan-African Congress (New York: William Morrow, 1972), and for the latter meeting, see James Garrett, "A Historical Sketch: The Sixth Pan-African Congress", Black World (March 1975): 4-20.

nations, it is clear that Malcolm's fond hopes for the United Nations exercising any real constraint against American racial practices would have been sadly disappointed. What was important about the proposal, however, was not the exact panacea recommended so much as its attempt to operate beyond the limits of the American political system and establish some organizational linkage between Afro-Americans and newly-independent African States. It was at this crucial point, however, that Malcolm X was to receive a rather rude shock to his politically sanguine hopes, for although both his extended visits to Africa and the Middle East were diplomatic and social successes, in the end African leaders with whom he had discussed his proposal, such as Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya, Sekou Toure of Guinea, and Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, either found themselves powerless to act or lacked the basic conviction to raise the matter before the United Nations.[19] To that extent the Afro-American struggle could not be "internationalized" but remained a "national" American problem, the only irony being that the African connection was nonetheless "nationalizing" the struggle by providing it with a more "complete" context than the American political system denied it. At the same time, however, the international linkage was not to be wholly denied since it was definitely a factor in the political calculation in America's Cold War strategy at the time. This potent fact was well understood by African leaders and was voiced openly by Tom Mboya, who pointed to it thus:

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[19]For the finally disappointing results of Malcolm X's appeal to African heads of state, see Peter Goldman, The Death and Life of Malcolm X (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), pp. 208, 212-218.

> . . . Let us not forget that the independence movement in Africa has had a great impact on the civil rights movement in America, besides giving it a slogan. In addition, this movement for independence has posed many important questions for white America in regard to the race problem in the United States. For example, James Baldwin has quoted in The Fire Next Time that the 1954 Brown v. Topeka Board of Education decision concerning school desegregation was largely motivated by the "competition of the cold war, and the fact that Africa was clearly liberating herself and there had, for political reasons, to be wooed by the descendants of her former masters". In its supporting brief in the Brown case, the Justice Department explained that "it is in the context of the present world struggle between freedom and (communist) tyranny that the problem of racial discrimination must be viewed". In other words, the United States Government understood very well that it would have difficulty making friends in Africa so long as the black American remained subjugated. Africans are highly conscious of the plight of black America, and they will be suspicious of the intentions of American foreign policy until they are convinced that the goal of American domestic policy is social justice for all.[20]

What cannot be in question, therefore, is the important transnational connection that existed between the perpetuation of the racial situation in America and America's international concerns. On the other hand, the onus in this situation fell upon America to act in accordance with its rhetoric of freedom, whereas what Malcolm X was pursuing was a situation in which Africans would be the actors in decisively intervening to alleviate the domestic plight of Afro-Americans. This was very different from passively sitting back and letting America's Cold

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[20]Tom Mboya, op. cit., p. 223. The eminent columnist on international affairs for The New York Times, C.L. Sulzberger, has recently commented on two separate occasions: "President Lyndon Johnson told me (1967): 'There is a deep connection between our foreign policy in Africa and our internal policy on civil rights" (emphasis mine), "The U.S. Black Connection", The New York Times, December 27, 1975, p. 17; and "Something Out of Nothing", ibid., April 28, 1976, p. 39. Sulzberger, in the first of these columns, added: "Any explosive issue on this continent (Africa) is mirrored by potential inter-racial attitudes in the United States . . . David Newsom, then Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, said in 1971: 'A violent confrontation between white and black in southern Africa would have an impact on our own society' ".

War image-shaping determine the fate of blacks in America.

Africans and Afro-Americans are still a long way off from reaching this sophisticated level of political coordination in their respective struggles. In the meantime, however, their heightened sense of political identification, which has steadily been issuing from the experiences of the last decade and a half of advances in the struggle for decolonization in Africa and liberation in America, has also exerted tremendous influence on at least three levels of Afro-American life, namely, the ideological-intellectual, the political-instrumental, and the organizational-institutional. These multiple activities certainly form part of a structured whole out of which Afro-Americans have significantly emerged with a much clearer sense of their own power and identity within American society at a level never before dreamed possible. The contribution of Africa and developments on that continent to this process of Afro-American social change is only gradually beginning to be incorporated into analyses of rapid social transformation affecting racial groups in America. This slowness of perception is undoubtedly due to the remarkable rapidity of the process with which the process has been unfolding as well as the fact that we are still not at all certain about its ultimate direction. It is very clear, at the same time, that it is precisely in the area of social change that the manifestation of transnational linkages between Afro-Americans and Africa is most crucially situated. Without some direct link to the process of social change, such linkages could not have found the necessary basis upon which to fructify. Our study of these linkages must, therefore, conclude by looking in some detail at the outlines of their impact

on Afro-American social transactions.

For the sake of clarity, we propose to discuss the three inter-related levels of activities separately while emphasising their over-lapping nature as part of a single on-going process involving all levels of the Afro-American community. We have chosen to designate these three levels as, firstly, the ideological-intellectual, secondly, the political-instrumental, and, thirdly, the organizational-institutional. All three go to make up not only what might now justifiably be described as a permanent "African lobby" in America, but also novel departures in the forms of social participation by which Afro-Americans have come increasingly to express themselves and make their opinions on a wide range of issues felt.

In starting with the ideological-intellectual changes, we do not mean to assign priority of place to this particular level, but simply to indicate the most pervasive of the three intersecting levels, namely, the level of consciousness. Most observers would agree that there has occurred, within the last decade in America, a veritable revolution in the popular consciousness of Afro-Americans. Tom Mboya expressed this condition succinctly when he declared that "our (meaning African) independence movement has also influenced the thinking of black Americans towards Africa and toward themselves . . . . Indeed, it can be said that some of them became, in a sense, more African than the Africans."[21] Whilst this might be an understandable hyperbole, we can perceive the vast expanse in consciousness that has had to be traversed by Afro-Americans in the last decade and a half

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[21]Tom Mboya, op. cit., pp. 223-224.

by simply pointing to an extraordinary incident, when looked at in hindsight, an incident which we are grateful to the official biographer of Richard Wright for preserving. The occasion was the historic "First Congress of Negro Artists and Writers" which was held in Paris in September, 1956, at which time we are told: "The American delegates, and in particular Mercer Cook, had been shocked to hear (Aime) Cesaire liken them to a colonized people."[22] How different it is with us today, when some form or other of the colonial analogy, however partial or strained, has been utilized in analyzing the Afro-American social situation! In this change of vision, it is hard not to recognize the powerful influence which the African experience of colonial oppression has exerted in the elaboration of these theoretical reassessments. In 1965 Kenneth B. Clark, the distinguished black American psychologist, in describing the ghetto condition of black Americans, asserts: "The dark ghettos are social, political, educational and - above all - economic colonies. Their inhabitants are subject peoples, victims of the greed, cruelty, insensitivity, guilt, and fear of their masters."[23] Before that, in

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[22]Michel Fabre, The Unfinished Quest of Richard Wright (New York: William Morrow, 1973), p. 437. It should be noted, however, that W.E.B. DuBois had already in 1947 designated black Americans as occupying a "quasi-colonial status" (An Appeal to the World, prepared for the NAACP for presentation to the United Nations under the editorial supervision of W.E.B. DuBois, 1947). The other members of the American delegation, all of whom were black, were John A. Davis, William Fontaine, Horace Mann Bond, and James Ivy. For an interesting narrative of the events of the Congress, see James Baldwin, "Princes and Powers", in Nobody Knows My Name (New York: Dell Publishing, 1963), pp. 24-54. Richard Wright's own ambivalent relationship to Africa is usefully summarised in Jack B. Moore, "Richard Wright's Dream of Africa", Journal of African Studies 2 (Summer 1975): 231-245.

[23]Kenneth B. Clark, Dark Ghetto (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), p. 11.

1962, Harold Cruse described the condition of Afro-Americans as that of "domestic colonialism".[24] I.F. Stone, writing in 1966, proclaimed: "In an age of decolonization, it may be fruitful to regard the problem of the American Negro as a unique case of colonialism, an instance of internal imperialism, an underdeveloped people in our very midst."[25] A final example of this application of the colonial mode of analysis to the condition of black Americans is provided by Stokely Carmichael and Charles V. Hamilton in their celebrated book, Black Power: The Politics of Liberation in America, published in 1967:

> To put it another way, there is no "American dilemma" because black people in this country form a colony, and it is not in the interest of the colonial power to liberate them. Black people are legal citizens of the United States with, for the most part the same legal rights as other citizens. Yet they stand as colonial subjects in relation to the white society. Thus institutional racism has another name: colonialism.[26]

Whatever the particular perspectives are of this employment of the colonial analogy for delineating the dynamics of the social situation facing black Americans in the context of racism, we are not here concerned with the merits or adequacy of their application; rather, we are concerned to show the ideological-intellectual linkage which the prism of a common colonial experience supported by Africans and

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[24]Harold Cruse, "Revolutionary Nationalism and the Afro-American", Studies on the Left 2 (1962): 13; see also Harold Cruse, Rebellion or Revolution (New York: William Morrow, 1968).

[25]The New York Review of Books (August 18, 1966), p. 10.

[26]Stokely Carmichael and Charles V. Hamilton, Black Power (New York: Vintage Books, 1967), p. 5. See also Charles V. Hamilton, "Conflict, Race and System-Transformation in the United States", Journal of International Affairs 23 (1969): 106-118.

Afro-Americans alike allows increasing numbers of contemporary commentators to perceive. The trans-acculturative aspect of knowledge is what is most pertinent in this context. Moreover, as Nathan Glazer has taken pains to emphasize in his well-argued critique of Robert Blauner's influential and provocative essay on the subject of "internal colonialism", what is at stake is considerably more than arguments about the sociology of knowledge, for depending on the point of view of the social scientist, there are very important public policy consequences that potentially flow from the adoption of the "colonial" model.[27] Hence, the question is not an abstract one in the least but one which as a matter of consequence involves political committment with the expectation of advancing the adoption of definite social policies for dealing with the American racial situation, which was something that was clearly perceived by the now famous Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1968).

At the same time, however, the debate over the status of black Americans as an "internal colony" of America must be situated within the wider context of the Black Consciousness Movement that emerged during the nineteen-sixties, an entire movement that was premised ideologically on the two fundamental aspects of the Afro-American

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[27]Nathan Glazer, "Blacks and Ethnic Groups: The Difference, and the Political Difference It Makes", pp. 193-211. In Nathan I. Huggins, Martin Kilson, and Daniel M. Fox, eds., Key Issues in the Afro-American Experience (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1971). Cf. also Robert Blauner, "Internal Colonialism and Ghetto Revolt", Social Problems 16 (Spring 1969): 393-408. For a scholarly appraisal of the view of black Americans as "colonials", see Oliver C. Cox, Race Relations: Elements and Social Dynamics (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1976), pp. 211-213.

experience, namely, cultural identity and power. There were many intersecting levels of this movement, particularly as it applied to the extended debate over "Black Power" which symbolised the strategic reassessment that the civil rights movement would undergo, but its two principal components should be kept clear and not confused. Once again, however, we can see the powerful acculturative influence which the African example of struggle exerted to help make this movement of ideas possible. The movement as a whole has been typified by Hoyt Fuller, the former editor of the now defunct Black World magazine, in the following terms:

> The Black Consciousness Movement was born of this stark reality: If Racism savaged the nation's soul, then the psychological survival of those singled out as victims demanded that they first clearly identify their enemies and then systematically act to gain the power and unity with which to confront and, ultimately, to defeat their enemies.

Conceptualization of this kind, although having its roots in the direct experience of American racism, was nonetheless emboldened and broadened by the vision which comparable ideological insights of the African anti-colonial struggle had spawned, and here we can see clear signs of the influence of the Martinician psychiatrist and Algerian freedom fighter, Frantz Fanon, whose books Black Skin, White Masks (New York: Grove Press, 1967), and The Wretched of The Earth (New York: Grove Press, 1963), represented perhaps the single most powerful ideological weapon in the black struggle in America during the nineteen-sixties.[28]

The new Black Consciousness posed with dramatic force the truth

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[28]For a good full-length treatment of Fanon's life and thought, see Irene Gendzier, Frantz Fanon (New York: Random House, 1974).

of the reality that whites held the power in America and blacks held none, a situation wherein one could try to understand its workings by calling upon the "colonial" model of power-relations on multiple levels. Indeed, beyond the question of power, the stormy other half of the Black Consciousness Movement was its promulgation of the concept of the "Black Aesthetic" as the sum of the values and norms that informed the totality of cultural creations among blacks.[29] Upon the concept of the "Black Aesthetic" a theory of black culture was gradually erected that tried to speak to the question of ways of achieving cultural emancipation as the necessary precondition for waging successful struggle on the secular plane.[30] It was in this precise setting that the significance of a "Black Value System" was articulated by persons such as Maulana Ron Karenga, Imamu Baraka, and others calling themselves "cultural nationalists". Once again, however, Afro-Americans were to be indebted for much of their insights on this question to the influential work of their African kinsmen. This was made plain by Hoyt Fuller's editorial statement:

> In a recent BLACK WORLD, the distinguished Senegalese intellectual Alioune Diop called anew for the solidarity of Black people everywhere as a prerequisite for the restoration of our "own cultural authority and initiative whose exercise is necessary for the life of our civilization and the renewal of its values". Diop sees the need for Black solidarity on two levels: "First, between the Black people themselves. We must ensure that the smallest ethnic community is able to discover the diversity of Black

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[29]The best collection on this controversial subject is Addison Gayle, Jr., ed., The Black Aesthetic (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1971).

[30]The most impressive theoretical diagram of cultural forms among black Americans is to be found in Larry Neal's "Some Reflections on the Black Aesthetic", (ibid., pp. 13-16), which is reprinted as an Appendix to this Monograph.

> traditions and that a common awareness is born in them and becomes that of a Black civilization which knows its own virtues as well as its weaknesses within international society"; and next, "between the Westernized elites and their own people" for "a gulf is opening between the elites and the people to the detriment of a complete solidarity forged round the values of their common history and common artistic, social, literary or spiritual heritage.[31]

It must be noted that this concept of "Black Aesthetic" informing cultural policies and political programs among blacks represented an advance beyond the earlier "African heritage" concept that had been pioneered by Afro-American thinkers such as Alain Locke and Carter G. Woodson. No one should be surprised at this development, however, since contemporary Afro-American thinkers have had available to them what previous generations of thinkers did not have, namely, the full flowering of artistic and intellectual discoveries of Negritude from Africa and the Caribbean as well as attempts at systematizing the expression of the "African Personality", and the whole backed up today by significant political legitimacy in the form of African State-power over the greater portion of the African continent.[32]

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[31]"Imagine the Unimaginable", Black World (October 1975), back cover. See also on this subject Carolyn M. Rodgers, "Uh Nat'chal Thang - The WHOLE TRUTH-US", Black World (September 1971): 4-14.

[32]The Afro-American historian, Lerone Bennett, Jr., points up the connection between current theorizing among blacks and their African counterparts: "The whole corpus of the tradition . . . is compressed into the folk myth Soul, the American counterpart of the African Negritude, a distinct quality of Negro-ness growing out of the Negro's experience and not his genes. Soul is a metaphorical evocation of Negro being as expressed in the Negro tradition. It is the feeling with which an artist invests his creation, the style with which a man lives his life. It is, above all, the spirit rather than the letter: a certain way of feeling, a certain way of expressing oneself, a certain way of being.", The Negro Mood (New York: Ballantine Books, 1965). p. 89. The principal Afro-American

Finally, out of this extensive ideological and cultural discourse as well as the unprecedented political awakening among black Americans that is now an important feature of American life, certain scholars today are trying to evolve upon the important intellectual foundations of previous Afro-American scholars a new conceptual framework for analyzing Afro-American history.[33] But whilst in the foreground there are these converging stimuli to the creation of a new Afro-American scholarship, once again we find in the background the looming influence of Africa. The new conceptual framework that is presently being worked out is commonly referred to as the "Afro-centric perspective on the Afro-American past". We have recently been given a clear delineation of what this new standard of interpretation involved by Professor Okon Edet Uya, himself a Nigerian, a fact which in itself is an important scholarly kind of linkage between the two areas of historical writing. Professor Uya asserts:

> . . . Afro-centricism, for me, answers the challenge of trying to see how African cultural dynamics played a part in the adjustment of the Afro-American to the New World situation. To make Afro-centricism meaningful for Afro-American history, it is extremely important to identify patterns of African cultural life, the religion of the people, patterns of family organization, patterns of social organization, and see to what extent these conceptions of reality could have affected interaction, could have acted as a cushion for the oppression of Blacks in the New World. In other words, one must capture the dynamics of African cultural life in order to understand what went on in the Afro-American community.

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precursors of the present discussion of culture are the sociologist-historian, W.E.B. DuBois, and the novelist-critic, Ralph Ellison.

[33]For a highly informative statement on the tradition of Afro-American scholarship and its application to Africa, see George Shepperson, "The Afro-American Contribution to African Studies", Journal of American Studies 8 (1975): 281-301.

> Having captured these dynamics, it becomes obvious that within the Afro-centric perspective, the Black man must be seen not merely as a victim of white oppression or as an object of white sympathy, but also, and much more importantly, from my point of view, as a creative maker of his own cultural destiny. In other words, one central problem for advocates of this perspective is to explain black survival and the role African cultural dynamics played in that process . . . This Afro-centric perspective also argues that the Afro-American experience cannot be understood without reference to these African roots, because significant elements of African cultures have always existed within the Afro-American community and have always played a part in the socialization of the Afro-American, although scholars are just beginning to "discover" this. Thirdly, the Afro-centric view argues that, like all ethnic groups in America, Black Americans, though sharing some aspects of general American culture, also possess a unique cultural orientation of their own. Among these are: a tendency to be oral, and communal; an emphasis on style as opposed to content; and lastly a tendency to be repudiative rather than confirmative of American culture. Also, unlike the general American cultural orientation, the Black cultural orientation tends to be more disunital than fragmentary. That is, there is a greater congruence among all the parts: religious, political, and economic. Things tend to interweave more closely within the Afro-American cultural orientation than in the general system. A meaningful historical perspective for Afro-Americans must reflect these elements. It must reflect a perception of the distinctness of the Afro-American within the general American society itself. It must come to grips with the patterns of life within this sub-culture.[34]

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[34]Okon Edet Uya, African History: Some Problems in Methodology and Perspective (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Africana Studies and Research Center Monograph Series No. 2, 1974), p. 23. Another good example of this developing historiography is P. Sterling Stuckey, "Through the Prism of Folklore: The Black Ethos in Slavery", The Massachusetts Review (Summer 1968): 417-437; cf. also the reappraisal given African cultural survivals during slavery in John W. Blassingame, The Slave Community: Plantation Life in The Ante-Bellum South (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), pp. 1-40. For a highly acclaimed application of the "Afro-centric view" to the history of Africa and world history in general, see Chancellor Williams, The Destruction of Black Civilization: Great Issues of a Race from 4500 B.C. to 2000 A.D. (Chicago: Third World Press, 1974). It is significant to note that Professor Uya concludes his work with the statement by Malcolm X: "The attitude of the Afro-American cannot be disconnected from the attitude of the African. The pulse beat, the voice, the very life drive that is reflected today here among Afro-Americans. The only way you can really understand the Black man in America and the changes in his heart and mind is to fully

Here we can perceive very well how the politically defined context, which is what we had earlier intimated elevated or activated subjective cultural factors into a dynamic consciousness that was, then, capable of helping the group to define experimentally boundaries of its collective existence relative to that of other groups. That is not to say, however, that such scholarly endeavor as outlined by Professor Uya is governed by ideology and political necessity. On the other hand, in the absence of these twin forces that establish a context for changing relationships within and between members of the group and those outside it, it is doubtful that the phenomenal reality of cultural production by the group would have much explicit meaning.

We can now examine the second level of linkages, what we have termed as the political-instrumental level. Significant overlap between this and the preceding level will be observed, however, as well as between both of these levels with the third level that we shall come to shortly. As we have emphasized, these are not fixed or immutable categories, but analytical devices for placing in perspective the multiplicity of current, and still developing, linkages between Africa and Afro-Americans. Something of the unity of these linkages, in addition to the specifically political-instrumental, can be perceived in the recently reported statement by the ex-Prime Minister of England, Edward Heath, when he was asked about the possible American reaction to a Cuban-backed African invasion of Rhodesia

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understand the heart and mind of the Black man on the African Continent; because it is the same heart and the same mind, although separated by four hundred years and the Atlantic Ocean", op. cit., p. 27.

(Zimbabwe) and South Africa. Mr. Heath cautioned:

> One mustn't forget that this is an election year in the States and the attitude of black voters is a particularly important factor. What would their view be? Would they permit a President to intervene in what could be made to appear a war of blacks against whites? I think not.[35]

Whatever the accuracy of the prediction might be, the statement nonetheless upholds the same meaning which the statements quoted previously of former President Lyndon B. Johnson and David Newsom attested to. The fact that such a significant linkage is perceived does establish prima facie that it must be a factor, without us even knowing the exact weight that is assigned to it, in the calculations of American policy-planners and decision-makers.

The nature of the Afro-American response to revolutionary developments on the African Continent, however, is tremendously complicated by the fact of the sharp political divergencies existing among African States and the equally divergent ideological cleavages represented in the political life of black America. Although this would not become a major factor in the event of an African-supported struggle against the two remaining bastions of European dominance on the continent, Rhodesia and South Africa, the effects of these political divergencies was recently exposed in the case of the Angolan civil war.[36] To the extent that African unity remains weak, to that

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[35]Quoted in C.L. Sulzberger, "U.S. Indecision and the World", The New York Times, February 21, 1976.

[36]For the political conflicts that arose among Afro-Americans over the Angolan issue as a result of the attempted mobilization by CORE (Congress of Racial Equality) to raise a mercenary force of blacks to fight on the side of the Western-backed factions in Angola, see The New York Times, December 14, 1975; January 29, February 13, February 28, 1976.

extent internal political division within the Afro-American community will find ample scope for expression. The political divisions in which Africa is caught up will have first to be overcome before there is to be expected anything resembling a united voice of black Americans on which particular political stance to adopt, and even then it is certain that there shall still remain dissenting viewpoints among black Americans.

The body that is best suited, however, to bring some degree of political cohesiveness to the African interest of Afro-Americans is the Congressional Black Caucus, a group of black Representatives in Congress who have increasingly asserted themselves on a wide range of African issues within the legislative branch as well as before the Administration. This is a process that is still in its embryonic stages but it has already become one of the major undertakings of the Caucus because, more than most other issues, it tends to focus increasing national attention on its presence in Congress. Thus, Africa is important to the Black Caucus, partly for the underlying attachment which many black Americans feel for the destiny of Africa, but in large part also because African issues strengthen the political position of black Congressmen in the American political establishment by providing them with a platform which has begun to take on increasing national and international significance, and which is likely to rapidly increase in importance to America's world-wide position as the final process of liberation unfolds in Africa.

It is in this light that we must understand the several endeavors which the Congressional Black Caucus has undertaken over the past few years in regard to Africa. In May 1972, the Caucus

sponsored the "African-American National Conference on Africa" which met in Washington, D.C., and among the major concerns of the Conference was "the establishment of a new lobbying organization that would seek greater ties between American blacks and Africans to combat racism and to press Western nations not to support white African Governments."[37] The Caucus itself has tried to elaborate as part of its overall legislative agenda a package of specific African-related measures encompassing repeal of the Byrd amendment on the importation of Rhodesian chrome in disregard of United Nations' sanctions against that country, the African Development Funding Act that would provide for multilateral trade and technical assistance committments based on the development priorities of African nations, and Fair Employment Practices for U.S. Firms in South Africa, and African drought emergency measures. Although these measures are sponsored by individual members of the Caucus, together they represent the collective voice of the Black members of Congress. In July of last year also three members of the Caucus went on a study mission

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[37] The New York Times, May 27, 1972. A few months before this conference was held, a meeting of twenty-seven black Americans drawn from universities and foundations took place at a mountain resort in Barranquitas, Puerto Rico. The newspaper account of the meeting stated: "For three days they worked to design a campaign to enable black Americans to play a greater role in framing national policy toward Africa. They met, they said, on the premise that blacks must assert themselves to help shape America's attitude toward Africa the way Jews have helped shape American policy toward Israel . . . . Meeting in a conference room of the Hotel Barranquitas, the group focused on South Africa, South-West Africa and the Portuguese territories of Angola, Mozambique, and Portuguese Guinea. The group could not agree that any one of those areas should have priority for its attention but it decided that the following activities would begin: The Congressional Black Caucus would be assisted in its scheduled hearings later this spring on American-African relations; Appearances by black experts on African affairs before Senatorial

to Liberia which was sponsored by the Phelps-Stokes Fund. The most notable contribution by the Caucus to American policy on Africa, however, came with the meeting which the Caucus held with Secretary of State Henry Kissinger on August 19, 1975. For this meeting with the Secretary of State, a lengthy statement was prepared and presented by the Caucus for consideration by the Administration. The hour and a half long session concentrated on three major issues: the Administration's then nebulous foreign policy on Africa, the United Nations Special Session of the General Assembly on Third World economic problems, and personnel policy within the State Department as it affects blacks. Prior to that meeting with Kissinger, however, the Congressional Black Caucus had vigorously opposed, in keeping with the expressed sentiments of many African countries, the appointment of Nathaniel Davis to the post of Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, citing Davis' inexperience in African affairs, and questions surrounding his actions as former Ambassador to Chile during the period of Salvador Allende's overthrow.[38]

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and Congressional committees discussing African-related issues would be increased; Attempts would be made to coordinate activities of black groups interested in Africa - such groups as the Congress of African People, the Congress of Racial Equality, black workers' organizations, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and People United to Save Humanity; Through black news media - black magazines, newspapers and television programs - education would be conducted on Africa, the southern Africa liberation movements and the impact of African developments on black Americans.", The New York Times, February 13, 1972. The activities contemplated here were in many respects a replay of the former "American Society of African Culture" that had operated between 1958-1966. Indeed, many of the persons attending the meeting in Puerto Rico were nearly all significant figures in AMSAC.

[38]Thomas A. Johnson, "A Key U.S. Appointment Angers Many Africans", The New York Times, June 15, 1975. For an overall statement from the leading member of the Congressional Black Caucus concerned with Africa,

It is still not clear how far these black American legislators can hope to expand their influence in shaping over-all Administration policy on Africa. A lot will depend on the mood of the black electorate and the nature of developments in Africa which might lead to a strong reaction on their part. In such an event, it can be certain that the Congressional Black Caucus will be heard from to press the black point of view, and in the process it will be expanding its own prestige and influence as a viable political lobby, something which it can then utilize in expanding its "clout" into other areas, particularly areas of domestic policy.[39]

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see Cong. Charles C. Diggs, "Viewpoint: The Afro-American Stake in Africa", Black World (January 1976): 4-8.

[39]One serious factor which complicates the effectiveness of the Caucus's relationship to Africa arises from the fact that the majority of its members are also heavily committed to the Israeli lobby in Congress, which forces them to take a pro-Israeli line on questions which increasingly pit them against the position of African States and the Organization of African Unity. For statements of public support for Israel from black Americans, see "An Appeal by Black Americans for United States Support to Israel", The New York Times, June 28, 1970; "Black Americans to Support Israel Committee", ibid., November 23, 1975; "Wilkins Says Anti-Jewish Terror Dismays Blacks", ibid., November 10, 1975; "Black Members of Congress Warn Against Attempts to Bar Israel from U.N.", St. Louis Argus, August 21, 1975; "Blacks Make Plea to U.N. on Zionism", The New York Times, November 9, 1975. The extent of black political support for Israel has moved one leading Afro-American figure to comment on "the current success of the Israeli lobby in organizing a group of black spokesmen to attack the Arabs in the name of the black American community, and even getting them to write a number of African governments urging them to support Israel or risk a cut off of their American aid." He concludes with the following: "The real tragedy in such a farce is that, while the black community has no power to turn aid to Africa either on or off, the Israeli lobby may have such power - and it would seem to be very dangerous and short-sighted for American blacks naively to permit their own powerlessness to be so misrepresented", Robert S. Browne, "The Black Stake in Global Interdependence", (Paper presented at the Congressional Black Caucus Legislative Workshop, September 26, 1975, Washington, D.C.), pp. 5-6.

One small piece of confirmation of the growing African-lobby within the Afro-American political community has come recently in the demands expressed by several Afro-American leaders for America to directly intervene in the fast-developing South African racial crisis. "We want intervention in South Africa", exhorts Rev. Jesse Jackson, adding:

> Now that black South Africans, led by their children, have chosen to confront the Government and openly protest various forms of racial minority rule, and have, as a result, been subjected to beatings, imprisonment and murder, we black Americans can no longer stand idle while our Government pursues 'business as usual' with such a state.[40]

Rev. Jackson was speaking with reporters after a significant meeting arranged with Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, to discuss the violent explosions that occurred throughout the spring and summer in South Africa. Acting as spokesman for the group who met with the Secretary of State, which included Mrs. Thelma Daley, president of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Councilman Jerry Moore of Washington, D.C., and Dr. Thurmond Evans, president of the District of Columbia School Board, Rev. Jackson stressed the fact that black Americans hoped to "build the broadest possible base (to lobby for an official American policy on Africa that would) reflect our vital concerns for Africa".[41] Black American influence in helping to formulate United States policy on South Africa is being reinforced, moreover, by the interest of American foreign policy-makers to develop a broad-based constituency for new American initiatives in

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[40]Thomas A. Johnson, "U.S. Blacks Meet on South Africa", The New York Times, Tuesday, August 24, 1976.

[41]Ibid.

that part of the world. In pursuit of this approach the Secretary of State undertook this summer several important speaking engagements to black groups, such as the Urban League's annual conference in Boston, the annual convention of the Opportunities Industrialization Centers in Philadelphia, and the national board of directors meeting of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. In this way it is certain that black Americans will increasingly begin to appreciate the strategic trans-national base they occupy within the American political system in regard to the future of the southern half of the African continent. Indeed, the full significance of this trans-national relationship has only just begun to be felt and will rapidly develop as the crisis in that sphere grows more explosive.

We come now, finally, to the third level of linkage by and through which Afro-Americans have articulated significant other trans-national connections with Africa. This is the level that we have designated as "organizational-institutional" since it involves the development of new organizational efforts within the Afro-American community and the formalization of such initiatives into new institutional arrangements. It should be pointed out, however, that not all such attempts have succeeded, and those which remain have survived in significantly changed form. This comes as no surprise since the whole point is the dynamic which the trans-national African connection releases within the Afro-American community and the consequent experimentation and adaptation which such efforts inevitably entail.

A novel effort in this direction has been the formation of RAINS (Relief for Africans in Need in the Sahel), a broad coalition of groups which is co-chaired by former Ambassador to Upper Volta, Elliot Skinner, and Congressman Charles Diggs. The objectives of RAINS is expressed by

its organizers as being:

> . . . to apply political pressure on the U.S. Government for direct and massive government aid to the countries involved; to co-ordinate and monitor fund raising for West African Famine Relief; and to organize and monitor research and technical assistance in the drought-affected area.[42]

These objectives will be pursued by separate sub-committees within the larger body responsible for Fund Raising, Political Action, Research/Technical Assistance, and Education/Information Dissemination. The groups which comprise the RAINS coalition are: AFRAM Associates, African Heritage Studies Association, African Information Service, African Liberation Support Committee, Black United Front of Cairo, Congress of African People, National Association of Black Social Workers, National Black Theatre, National Committee of Black Churchmen, National Conference of Black Lawyers, National Council of Black Women, National Welfare Rights Organization, Pan African Liberation Committee, and Interreligious Foundation for Community Organization.

The list of these groups is expressive as well of the range of organizational-institutional diversity that has evolved among black Americans in pursuing certain explicit trans-national linkages with Africa. At another level of institutional support, however, we have "The African-American Scholars Council" which is a private, non-profit, education organization founded in 1972 by black American scholars and professionals desiring to work with their African counterparts toward the solution of common problems of economic and social development. The program of the Council concentrates on supporting research and

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[42]"Black Coalition Seeks Africa Drought Relief", The Black Scholar 4 (July-August 1973): 45.

exchange activities by African and American scholars and enabling students and young scholars to acquire skills and field experience relevant to economic and-or social development.

A somewhat analogous area of development assistance and exchange is to be found in the Southern University Cameroon Project by which Southern University, a black college, was authorised in 1970 by the Agency for International Development to assist the national advanced School of Agriculture of the University of Yaounde in establishing a Department of Agricultural Economics. The grant entails Southern University specifically training eight African students to the M.A., and in some cases to the Ph.D. level, in specializations required for the Department of Agricultural Economics.

An important institutional initiative in the educational arena has also come from the "African Bibliographic Center" established in Washington, D.C., and which has significantly augmented the work of bibliographical research on Africa and Afro-American linkages through the publication of its Current Bibliography on African Affairs and other important serial publications. The African Bibliographic Center was founded and organized by Dan Matthews, an Afro-American scholar with wide experience of African affairs.

Other institutional initiatives concerned with educational research have been the establishment in 1969-70 of "The Institute of the Black World" in Atlanta as an independent research centre devoted to the definition of the African and Afro-American experience in all its many manifestations. More recently there has been established in Atlanta the "Religious Heritage of the Black World" at the Inter-denominational Theological Center, perhaps the major institution for Afro-American theological training in America.

There have been certain novel experiments undertaken as well in the cultural sphere of publishing such as the very contrasting work to date of Joseph Okpaku's Third Press in New York and Haki Madhubuti's Third World Press in Chicago. Okpaku, a Nigerian, has definitely become the pre-eminent black publisher in the United States today, which offers reinforcement of the strivings for independent black publishing houses. Mr. Okpaku stresses, however, the importance of the African connection in his enterprise:

> Our African heritage has given us the kind of strength that allows for failures because it has given us a strong sense of individual worth. The black visitor brings with him his strong family base, his sense of belonging somewhere, and that's crucial.[43]

From his New York base the young Nigerian entrepreneur has begun to develop important trans-national linkages outside of America and is planning to set up a University Press in Kuwait and a Third Press in Nigeria, which he hopes will be a co-operative enterprise with the Nigerian Government.

Many other institutional developments could be discussed, such as "The Afro-American Historical and Cultural Museum" in Philadelphia and its counterpart in Boston as well, and the "African Heritage Studies Association", all of which aim at the revision in the ways in which Afro-Americans see themsevles in relation to Africa and by this means the way in which they see themselves in relation to their fellow-Americans with all that such redefinition implies for cultural identity in a complex racially-plural society. Enough has been said, however, to establish the basic point that the cultural reawakening

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[43]Ernest Holsendolph, "Okpaku: To Publish for Profit", The New York Times, Sunday, July 20, 1975 (Business Section).

and political struggles in the lives of Afro-Americans, whilst to a significant degree centred on the trans-national linkages with Africa, have already begun to assume concrete institutional shape in the social structure of the black American community. This is no small achievement for both Afro-Americans as well as Africans.

APPENDIX

SOME REFLECTIONS ON THE BLACK AESTHETIC by LARRY NEAL

This outline below is a rough overview of some categories and elements that constituted a "Black Aesthetic" outlook. All of these categories need further elaboration, so I am working on a larger essay that will tie them all together.

Mythology
Spirit worship, Orishas, ancestors, African Gods. Syncretism/ catholic voodoo, macumba, Holy Ghost, Jesus as somebody you might know, like a personal diety. River spirits.

formal manifestation
Samba, Calypso, Batucada, Cha-Cha, juba, gospel songs, jubilees, work song, spirituals.

1. RACE MEMORY (Africa, Middle Passage)
   Rhythm as an expression of race memory; rhythm as a basic creative principle; rhythm as a existence, creative force as vector of existence. Swinging

2. MIDDLE PASSAGE (Diaspora)
   Race memory: terror, landlessness, claustrophobia: "America is a prison . . ." Malcolm X.

Neo-Mythology
Shamans: Preachers, poets, blues singers, musicians, mackdaddies, and politicians.

formal manifestation
All aspects of Black dance styles in the New World. Pelvic. Dress and walk.

3. TRANSMUTATION AND SYNTHESIS
   Funky Butt, Stomps, Jump Jim Crow, Buck n' Wing, Jigs. Snake, Grind, slow drag, jitterbug. twist, Watusi, fish, swim, boogaloo, etc. Dance to the *after* beat. Dance as race memory; transmitted through the collective folk consciousness.

Neo-Mythology
Legba, Oshun, Yemaya, Urzulie, Soul Momma, Evil women, Good loving women, woman as primarily need/ man as doer. Blues singer as poet and moral judge; bad man Earth centered, but directed cosmologically. Folk poet, philosopher, priest, priestess, conjurer, preacher, teacher, hustler, seer, soothsayer . . .

4. BLUES GOD/TONE AS MEANING AND MEMORY
   Sound as racial memory, primeval. Life breath. Word is perceived as energy or force. Call and response Blues perceived as an emanation outside of man, but yet a manifestation of his being/reality. Same energy source as Gospel, field holler, but delineated in narrative song. The African voice transplated. This God must be the meanest and the strongest. He survives and persists Once perceived as an evil force: ". . . and I (Dude Botley) got to thinking about how many thousand of people (Buddy) Bolden had made happy and all of them women who used to idolize him 'Where are they now?' I say to myself. Then I hear Bolden's cornet. I look through the crack and there he is, relaxed back in the chair, blowing that silver cornet softly, just above a whisper, and I see he's got his hat over the bell of the horn. I put my ear close to the keyhole. I thought I heard Bolden play the blues before, and play hymns at funerals, but what he is playing now is real strange and

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BLUES GOD/TONE AS MEANING AND MEMORY (cont'd)

I listen carefully, because he's playing something that, for a while sounds like the blues, then like a hymn. I cannot make out the tune, but after awhile I catch on. He is mixing up the blues with the hymns. He plays the blues real sad and the hymn sadder than the blues and then the blues sadder than the hymn. That is the first time that I had ever heard hymns and blues cooked up together. A strange cold feeling comes over me; I get sort of scared because I know the Lord don't like that mixing the Devil's music with his music. . . . It sounded like a battle between the Good Lord and the Devil. Something tells me to listen and see who wins. If Bolden stops on the hymn, the Good Lord wins; if he stops on the blues, the Devil wins."

HISTORY AS UNITARY MYTH

Shango, Nat Turner, Denmark, Vesey, Brer' Rabbit, High John the Conqueror, Jack Johnson, Ray Robinson, Signifying Monkey, Malcolm X, Adam Clayton Powell, Garvey, DuBois, Elijah Muhammed, Martin L. King, Rap Brown, Rev. Franklin, Charlie Parker, Duke Ellington

5 BLACK ARTS MOVEMENT/BLACK ART AESTHETIC

Feeling/contemporary and historical. Energy intensifies. Non-matrixed art forms: Coltrane, Ornette, Sun Ra. More concerned with the vibrations of the Word, than with the Word itself. Like signifying.

HISTORY AS UNITARY MYTH (cont'd)

James Brown, Bessie Smith Moms Mabley, King Pleasure, Raefilt Johnson. Son House. Louis Armstrong. . . . Voodoo again/Ishmael Reed's Hoodoo. Islamic suffis. Third World's destiny. The East as the Womb and the Tomb. Fanon's Third World, Bandung Humanism. Revolution is the operational mythology. Symbol change. Expanded metaphors as in the poetry of Curtis Lyle and Stanley Crouch; or L. Barrett's *Song For MuMu* . . . Nigger styles and masks such as Rinehart in the *Invisible Man*. Style as in James P. Johnson description of stride pianists in the twenties. Bobby Blue Bland wearing a dashiki and a process. All of this links up with the transmutation of African styles and the revitalization of these styles on the West.

5. BLACK ARTS MOVEMENT/BLACK ART AESTHETIC (cont'd)

The Black Nation as Poem. Ethical stance as aesthetic. The synthesis of the above presented outline. The integral unity of culture, politics, and art. Spiritual. Despises alienation in the European sense. Art consciously committed; art addressed primarily to Black and Third World people. Black attempts to realize the world as art by making Man more compatible to it and it more compatible to Man. Styles itself from nigger rhythms to cosmic sensibility. Black love, conscious and affirmed. Change.

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